CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for rendering audio, the method comprising:

receiving by a dedicated home network enabled digital-to-analog audio bridging device (ABD), digital audio data transmitted across a network from a remotely located audio host;

determining by the ABD whether the digital audio data is encoded according to one of a plurality of coding schemes;

decoding by the ABD encoded digital audio data based upon a determined coding scheme; and

converting by the ABD the digital audio data to analog audio and outputting the analog audio for use by a loudspeaker proximately located to the ABD.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the audio host is a general purpose computing device having an operating system.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the digital audio data is encoded by the audio host.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of coding schemes include mp3, wav, au, and aiff.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving digital audio data comprises receiving a plurality of digital audio data segments and reconstructing the digital audio data from the received plurality of digital audio data segments.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the coding scheme is determined by identifying an indicator code included within at least one of the plurality of digital audio data segments.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein decoding further comprises:

determining whether the received digital audio data is compressed; and

decompressing the compressed digital audio data based upon the determined coding scheme.

8. The method according to claim 7, further comprising outputting the analog audio to an amplification device.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the digital audio data is received across at least one of a plurality of home-based networks including a phoneline network, a powerline network, and a HomeRF network.

10. A digital-to-analog audio bridge comprising:

a network interface to receive digital audio data transmitted over a network from a remote audio host;

a processor coupled with the network interface to:

identify which one of a plurality of coding schemes the received digital audio data has been encoded with, and

decode the encoded digital audio data based upon the identified coding scheme; and

a converter coupled to the processor to convert the received digital audio data to analog audio for use by a proximately located loudspeaker.

11. The digital-to-analog audio bridge according to claim 10, wherein the network interface enables communication between the digital-to-analog audio bridge and the network audio host over at least one of a plurality of home-based networks including a phoneline network, a powerline network, and a HomeRF network.

12. The digital-to-analog audio bridge according to claim 10, wherein the loudspeaker is coupled to the converter.

13. The digital-to-analog audio bridge according to claim 10, wherein the plurality of coding schemes include mp3, wav, au, and aiff.

14. The digital-to-analog audio bridge according to claim 10, further comprising a read only memory coupled to the processor to store at least one CODEC.

15. The digital-to-analog audio bridge according to claim 10, wherein the processor decompresses the digital audio data if it is determined that the digital audio data is compressed.

16. A residential network audio system comprising:

a host device disposed in a first area of a residential structure to transmit digital audio data over a network; and

a digital-to-analog audio bridge disposed in a second area of the residential structure, communicatively coupled with the host, to receive the digital audio data transmitted from the host, to identify by which of a plurality of coding schemes the received digital audio data is encoded, to decode the received digital audio data based upon the identified coding scheme, and to convert the received digital audio data to analog audio for use with a loudspeaker.

17. The residential network audio system according to claim 16, wherein the host device comprises a general purpose computing device.

18. The residential network audio system according to claim 16, wherein the network comprises a home-based network including at least one of a phoneline network, a powerline network, and a HomeRF network.

19. The residential network audio system according to claim 16, wherein the digital-to-analog audio bridge is further disposed to:

determine whether the received digital audio data is compressed; and

decompress the compressed digital audio data based upon the determined coding scheme.

20. The residential network audio system according to claim 16, wherein the digital audio data is transmitted according to the real-time transport protocol (RTP).

21. An article comprising a machine readable medium having a plurality of machine readable instructions stored thereon, wherein when the instructions are executed by a processor, the instructions subscribe the processor to:

receive digital audio data transmitted across a network from an audio host;

determine whether the digital audio data is encoded according to one of a plurality of coding schemes;

decode encoded digital audio data based upon a determined coding scheme; and

convert the digital audio data to analog audio suitable for use with a loudspeaker;

22. The article of claim 21, wherein the digital audio data is transmitted across a home-based network including at least one of a phoneline network, a powerline network, and a HomeRF network.

Add A4

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